



TESTIMONY PRESENTED TO THE HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

**HOUSE BILL 255 – MARYLAND INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITIES PROGRAM - CREATION AND
INCOME TAX CREDIT**

Delegate Samuel Rosenberg

February 1, 2022

DONALD C. FRY

PRESIDENT & CEO

GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE

Position: Support

House Bill 255 establishes the Maryland Internship Opportunities Program to provide students with internship opportunities with humanities-based businesses. Money awarded under the program may be used to reimburse a humanities-based business or unit of State or local government up to 50% of a stipend paid to an intern, but no more than \$4,200 each year for each intern. The bill also creates an income tax credit for a Maryland business that employs an eligible intern as a full time employee within six months of the individual's graduation. The amount of the credit may not exceed \$4,200 annually.

Creating and nurturing a strong workforce is one of the Greater Baltimore Committee's most important priorities. Without a strong workforce, Maryland's economy cannot innovate, grow, and create jobs. To develop and improve Maryland's workforce, there is a need for early career training and learning opportunities. House Bill 255 addresses this important need by opening new pathways for Maryland's college and university students to work in a humanities-based business or unit of State or local government prior to graduation. This bill encourages innovative solutions to expand opportunities for employment or workplace-based experiences for Maryland's future workforce.

House Bill 255 specifically states that the tax credit is intended for Maryland employers who would not have hired an intern without a tax credit. The GBC maintains that an incentive for businesses to hire interns is worth the investment and will have the desired outcome of urging employers to utilize interns as part of their workforce development strategy.

Another positive result of this program may be to persuade more graduates of Maryland's higher education system to remain in the State after participating in a local internship rather than seek employment elsewhere. It is important that Maryland's best students be given every opportunity to live and work in the State, especially in high-demand and competitive job sectors.

This bill is consistent with one of the key tenets in *Gaining the Competitive Edge: Keys to Economic Growth and Job Creation in Maryland*, a report published by the GBC that identifies eight core pillars for a competitive business environment and job growth. The pillar provides:

Workforce that is highly-educated and meets Maryland's business needs. Maryland's secondary and higher education institutions must offer access to quality instruction at all levels and cultivate a workforce that is well-suited to a modern economy and to the specific needs of Maryland's business sectors.

GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE

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For these reasons, the Greater Baltimore Committee urges a favorable report on House Bill 255.

The Greater Baltimore Committee (GBC) is a non-partisan, independent, regional business advocacy organization comprised of hundreds of businesses -- large, medium and small -- educational institutions, nonprofit organizations and foundations located in Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford, and Howard counties as well as Baltimore City. The GBC is a 67-year-old, private-sector membership organization with a rich legacy of working with government to find solutions to problems that negatively affect our competitiveness and viability.